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Can a new \$400 million federal program slow the sex drive of American teenagers?

Libertarians are dubious about GOP-inspired abstinence program

WASHINGTON, DC — **Uncle Sam doesn't want you to have sex.**

In fact, the federal government is so determined to stamp out unapproved sexual activity that it's spending \$50 million to teach young Americans the joy of sexual abstinence, the Libertarian Party noted today.

"Talk about another government program that's doomed to failure!" said the party's national chairman, Steve Dasbach. "A Congress that can't say no when it comes to wasting money thinks it can teach American teenagers to say no when it comes to sex."

Starting on Wednesday, the federal government will hand out the first \$50 million in grant money to states to promote abstinence until marriage. The new "just say no to sex" program — authorized in the 1996 welfare reform bill — is intended to cut down on teenage pregnancies and reduce government welfare costs.

In all, \$400 million has been allocated for the GOP-inspired program, which Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA) hailed as "a really Republican step." Other GOP leaders said the program will help counteract the federal government's "liberal" sex education and family-planning programs.

"For Republicans, abstinence makes the heart grow fonder — so much fonder that they're willing to spend \$400 million of *our* money to promote it," said Dasbach. "Once again, Republicans show that they don't really want to *reduce* the cost of government — they just want to *redirect* it to promote the Republican social agenda."

But instead of subsidizing a sexual counter-revolution, the federal government should get out of the sex business entirely, said Dasbach.

"You don't teach responsibility by having Washington, DC — a city notorious for the sexual escapades of Teddy Kennedy, Bob Packwood, Wilbur Mills, Bill Clinton, and Dick Morris — waste our money on lectures about abstinence," he said.

"Libertarians realize that it doesn't take a federally funded lecture to teach sexual responsibility. Ultimately, there's only one way to teach responsibility — by letting people be genuinely responsible for the consequences of their own actions," he said.

Most of the states will spend the initial \$50 million cash windfall on anti-sex media campaigns — ranging from billboards to public service announcements, according to the Sexuality Information & Education Council of the United States.

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